

## Emergency Preparedness

The Arizona State Library and Archives were leaders in the nation's response to help libraries and archives in the Katrina disaster affected areas. GladysAnn Wells, Director of the State Library and Archives, was just concluding her term as President of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. Richard Pearce-Moses, Director of Digital Government Information, had just taken office as President of the Society of American Archivists in New Orleans the week before the levees broke. Because of their leadership roles, both undertook significant efforts to guide the professional response to the disaster.

Wells spent a significant amount of time working with other state librarians, gathering information about the safety of staff and what was needed to help libraries get back on their feet. Dr. Allen Weinstein, the Archivist of the United States, asked Pearce-Moses to be on a disaster assessment team and visit the Mississippi coast to ensure that recovery efforts were based on fact rather than rumor.



**1. Pearce-Moses and David Carmicheal of the Georgia State Archives inspecting damaged records at Beauvoir**

Pearce-Moses was quoted in a story by the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the disaster assessment team's report was cited a number of times.

The Arizona State Library and Archives, with the Society of American Archivists, began promoting "MayDay." This event, to be observed on the first of May, is intended to be one day each year when emergency preparedness is given staff's full attention. One lesson Pearce-Moses observed from the Mississippi coast was that many small advanced preparations could minimize damage to records and a repository's ability to recover from a major disaster. Librarians and records professionals will be asked to do small, but significant things on each MayDay – such as updating contact lists, conducting a fire drill, and ensuring that sufficient emergency supplies are on hand.